



UPTON SNODSBURY



VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

2010



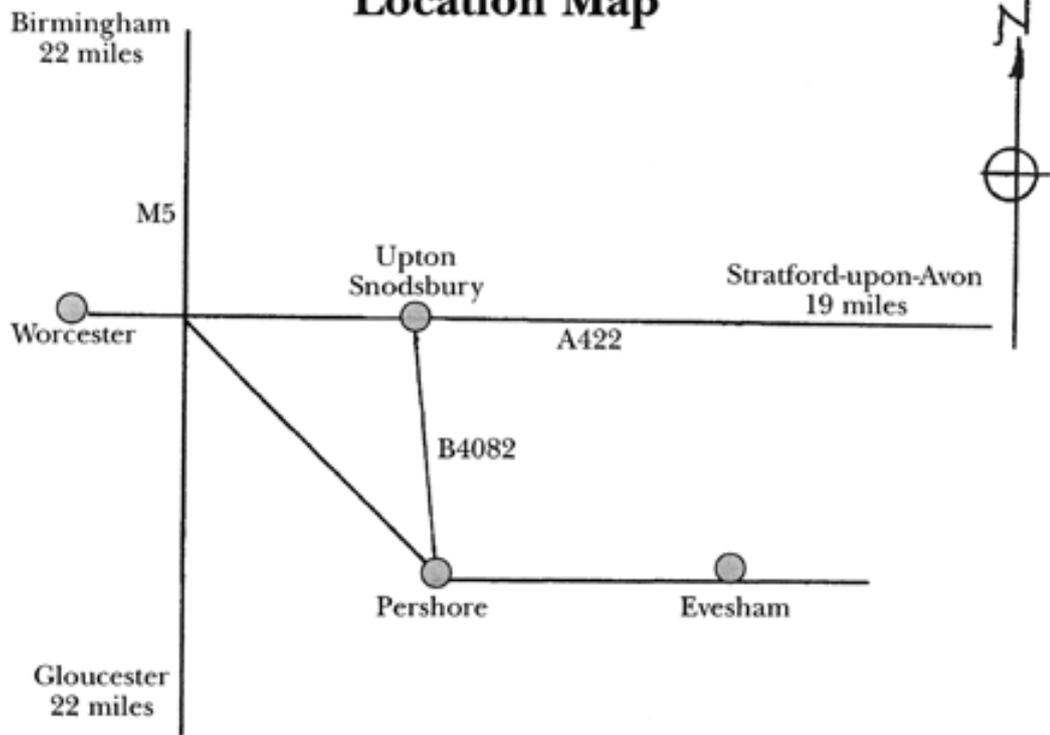


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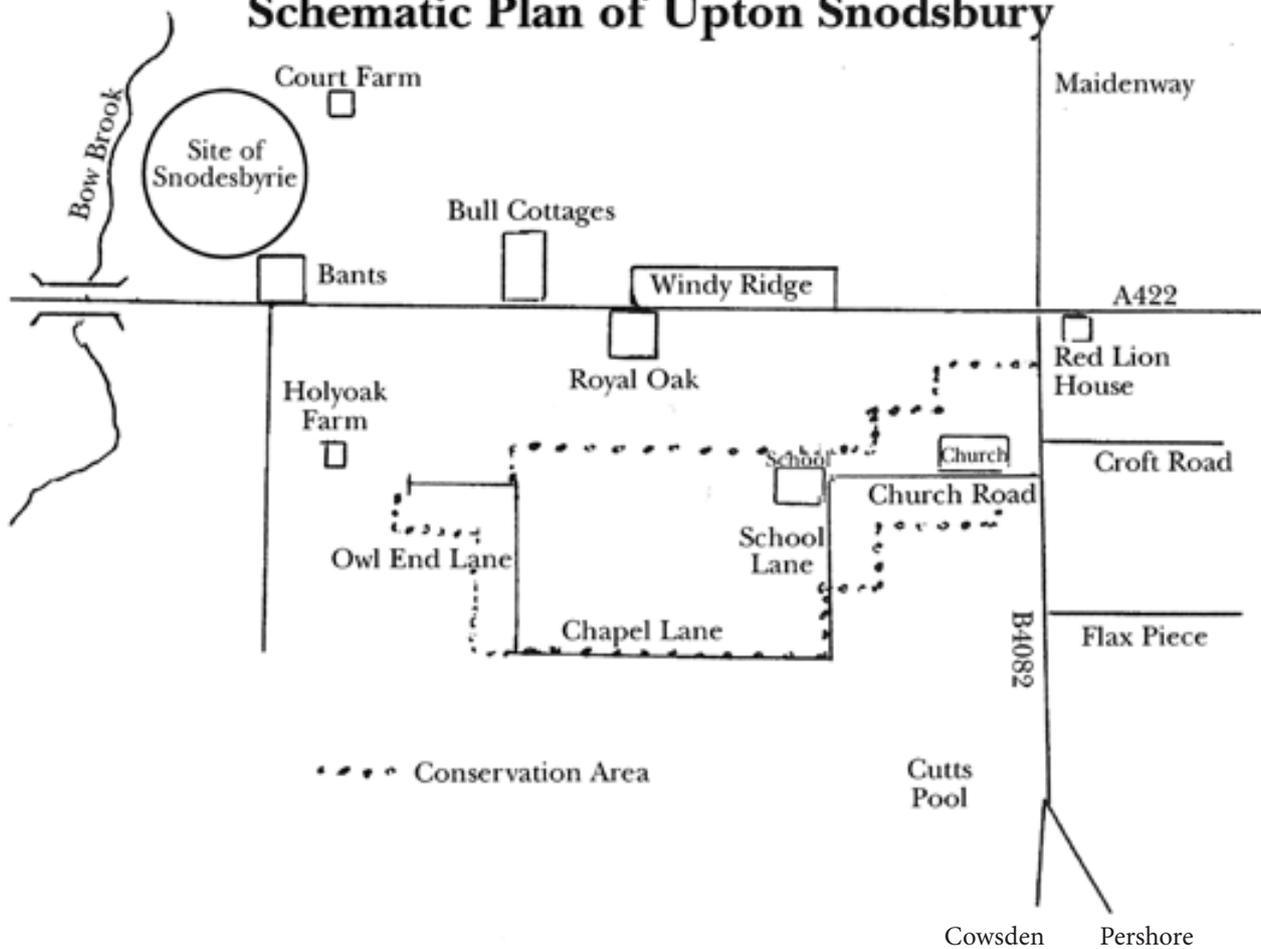
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Location Map



Schematic Plan of Upton Snodsbury

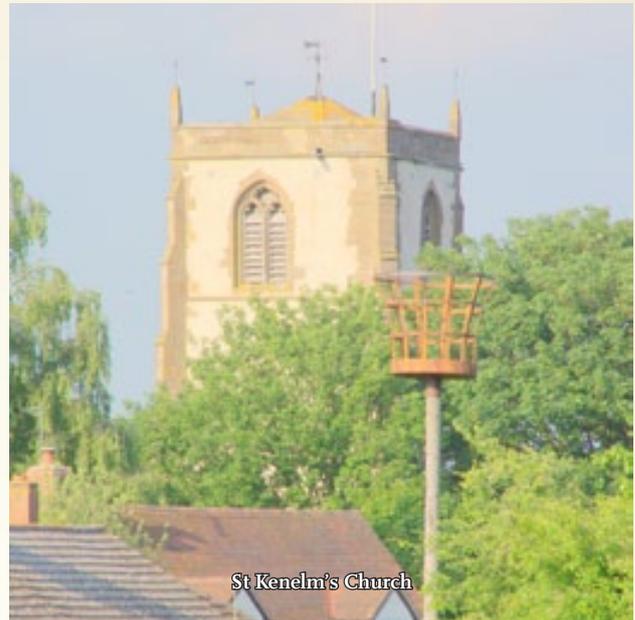


1. BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The village of Upton Snodsbury is located at the junction of the B4082 with the A422 six miles east of Worcester. The settlement contains some 150 dwellings, a village school, ancient church, village shop/post office, modern village hall and two pubs. It also boasts small play area for young people of the village.

Upton Snodsbury has been described as ‘a jewel in Worcestershire’ and in earlier times as ‘a village in the orchards’. The village was founded in about the seventh century and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. There are some 26 Listed Grade II ‘black and white’ timber framed houses in the village – most of them located in a Conservation Area near the church. The remaining houses are a mix of victorian and twentieth century houses. Together they form an attractive small village set in the Worcestershire countryside.



The Village Design Statement (VDS) reflects the views of the community expressed in our Parish Plan survey and seeks to influence planning decisions made locally and nationally that might affect the future of the village. We accept that the future will bring change and we see the VDS as a way of helping to manage those changes for the benefit of the village community as a whole. This document has been prepared using information taken from our Parish Plan, original research and views expressed at a public meeting.

1.2 VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Village Design Statements (VDS) were established by the Countryside Commission in 1996. Their major objectives are:

- to provide a forum for the community to say what it is that they value about their village and how they would like to see it develop in the future
- to describe the distinctive character of the village through its buildings and its landscape setting
- to demonstrate how this character can be protected and enhanced
- to provide guidelines for householders, architects and developers when new developments are proposed, so that they respect the character of the village and make positive contributions to the local environment
- to influence future policies when the planning authority is updating its Local Plan

After consideration by the Parish Council, the Statement will be submitted to Wychavon District Council and will, if approved, form a local information document that will guide future planning and development decisions.

1.3 PLANNING CONTEXT

WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Planning policy for Upton Snodsbury is set out in the Wychavon Local Plan 2006 (but see the Regional Spatial Strategy below). This Design Statement is consistent with the policies in that Plan and provides the District Council with guidance that reflects the special character of the village and its surroundings. Local planning applications are handled by the District Council's Planning Office, whose officers have authority to decide upon the majority of applications. Decisions on large scale or controversial applications are made by the Council's Development Control Committee. All planning applications affecting the village are advertised locally and are discussed by the Parish Council, which sends their recommendations to the District Council. Residents can also send in their views to the District Council.



1.4 CONSERVATION AREA

Much of the western end of the village was designated a Conservation Area in 1969. Many of the houses in Church Road, School Lane, Chapel Lane and Owl End Lane are Listed Buildings although there are several more in other parts of the village.

Designation of a Conservation Area is important because it is an official recognition of the collective value of buildings and their surroundings, and of the desirability of conserving the character of the village and its setting as a whole. Within a Conservation Area special planning policies (e.g. ENV12, the Local Plan) and strict guidelines apply to new buildings and their design and also for alterations to existing buildings.



1.5 LISTED BUILDINGS

As mentioned above, Upton Snodsbury has a wealth of Listed Buildings. The Church of St. Kenelm is a Listed Grade II* building and there are some 26 other ancient houses in the village all designated Grade II. Due perhaps to the earlier proximity to Feckenham Forest, most of the houses are timber framed 'black and white' buildings, most dating back to the 17th century although parts of some are thought to be older. Some are thatched whilst most of the others are roofed with hand made burnt red earthenware tiles. Timber framing is mainly of elm and oak infilled with wattle and daub and built on a mudstone plinth. Window frames are of 'worcestershire' pattern and single glazed, as Planning Regulations for listed building forbid the installation of double glazed units.



These planning regulations ensure that all changes to listed buildings are in sympathy with the Conservation Area environment aimed at preserving these unique buildings.

1.6 PLANNING CONCERNS

Building plots within the village 'envelope' are almost non-existent. The only open land within the village boundary is designated as 'open space/strategic gap' under Policy BC7 in the current Local Plan. Feedback from our Parish Plan survey indicated that villagers wish to preserve this land free from development for the foreseeable future as it is:-

- a) home to walnut trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders. These trees were planted in memory of those men of the parish who fell in the 1914-1918 War.
- b) an open space which historically provides a definitive gap between the original village of Snodsbury and the later settlement of Upton.

We also understand that there may be a covenant on this land, which affects house building.

Over the next decade no doubt that additional houses will be built in the village. As stated above, there are no 'brownfield' sites within the village envelope other than the Woodview Garage site. Any new development would therefore be on 'greenfield' agricultural land.

Several proposals to develop Woodview Garage site have been advocated. The developers current thoughts are for a 39 bed Care Home plus 2 detached houses and a block of 2 semi-detached houses on the site. No formal planning applications have yet been approved.



Whilst we accept that some new building is inevitable, the character of the village must be preserved. We therefore have deep concerns regarding the location of future development, as views of Bredon Hill to the south and Castle Hill/Bow Wood to the north and the Malvern Hills to the west are much valued by residents. Our Conservation Area preserves much of the character of bygone times and must be safeguarded when planning for the future.

1.7 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The new Coalition government is creating new legislation that will see local planning authorities determining their own growth targets which will be produced in consultation with the local community.

2. THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

2.1 LANDSCAPE

Upton Snodsbury is located on a ridge of high land between the Piddle Brook to the east and Bow Brook to the west. Both of these watercourses drain into the River Avon near Pershore.

For many centuries agriculture provided the main employment in the parish with livestock predominating, although grain and cider were also produced – much of the latter being exported to the Black Country. Over the past 60 years economics have dictated the reduction/demise of virtually all of these enterprises. The last vestiges of the many fruit orchards now provide the backbone of the Blossom Trail so popular in springtime. Many of the fields are medieval ‘ridge and furrow’ and numerous footpaths criss-cross the land. Several of the remaining six farms have now diversified with barns and outbuilding housing small businesses.

To the north of the parish lies Bow Wood, this is a remnant of the ancient Feckenham Forest and covers much of Castle Hill, (an Iron Age fort) and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).



The small market town of Pershore is 6 miles to the south of the village along the B4082 and the M5 motorway is some 5 miles to the west of the village and may be accessed at either junctions 6 or 7.

The village itself reflects development over the centuries and clusters around the 13th century church of St Kenelm. Apart from the A422 and B4082, roads in the village are narrow and not particularly well maintained - they were not designed for the weight of modern day traffic which causes damage to the undersurface drainage pipes etc. Many of the lanes have no footpaths and there is no mains gas or street lighting in the village.

The small hamlet of Cowsden lies to the south of Upton Snodsbury and is approached through narrow country lanes. It comprises some 15 houses of varying ages set in an unchanged rural landscape. As in Upton Snodsbury, the lanes are without footpaths and street lighting.

2.2 HISTORY

It is thought that the ancient village of Snodesbyrie was founded by Saxons in the seventh century. They settled on land adjacent to Bow Brook in the vicinity of Court Farm. Nothing of this settlement remains with the exception of ‘hollow ways’ in the field opposite Bants pub and evidence of a ‘mill leet’ in the grounds of Court Farm. Snodsburie (sic) figures in Domesday when it was valued at £7.10.0 (£7.50) !!





In those days much of the surrounding land was owned by Westminster Abbey, having been gifted to it by various landowners. There is record of many legal disputes between Westminster and the Abbot of Pershore Abbey who also laid claim to land in the Parish.

The construction of St Kenelm's church in the 1200's saw it become the nucleus of the village of Upton, and in 1326 the two communities were formally united as Upton Snodsbury. Interestingly, the field on the corner of A422 and B4082 was for many centuries owned by the Church Commissioners and served as open land separating the two ancient settlements. This field is now designated as an 'Open Space/Strategic Gap under Policy BC 7 in the current Local Plan.

Very little happened in the centuries preceding the Civil War. The two sieges of Worcester in 1646 and 1651 however, saw the land surrounding the city ravaged by both Royalists and Parliamentarians. Indeed, no complete dwellings prior to the war exist in the village today, although some remnants have been incorporated into existing black and white houses, most of which were constructed in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. In 1707 a foul murder was committed in the village. A Mrs Palmer and her maid were murdered in a house known as Bull Cottage and the building set on fire. Subsequently, Mrs Palmer's son, her brother and others were convicted of the crime. Legend has it that one of those executed was hung in a gibbet at the scene of his crime!

Upton Snodsbury continued its tranquil existence and in 1951 was described in Worcester Berrows Journal as '.....the village in the orchards'. Long may this quiet corner of rural Worcestershire remain!



3. CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGE

3.1 SETTLEMENT PATTERN OVERVIEW

The settlement pattern of Upton Snodsbury and Cowsden is best understood when broken down into four fairly distinctive areas which have a total of 150 households. Each area has a wonderful mix of architectural style and character. The older buildings, which are mainly traditional black and white cottages, some of which still have a thatched roof, are found in each of the areas. Most of the other buildings, with the exception of St. Kenelm's Church, are red brick and tile and many of these are part rendered and painted white or cream.

There are two major routes into and out of the villages:-Worcester to Stratford-Upon-Avon Road (A422) and Pershore Road (B4082)

All entrances to Upton Snodsbury and Cowsden are through gently rolling farmland giving open views over well-maintained hedges to the fields, hills and woodland beyond. A comprehensive network of footpaths connects the various parts of the community to the wider countryside beyond.



The 'Oak' Pub

3.2 WORCESTER TO STRATFORD-UPON-AVON ROAD

The entrance to the village from Worcester has open views across farmland and there are farmhouses and buildings standing a little way back from the road on either side. One of these, Court Farm, dates from the sixteenth century. Both village pubs stand on this road and the first, Bants, is on the left as you enter the village. The other, The Oak, is a little further into the village and on the right. These are valued and appreciated both having a good reputation for food and accommodation as well as somewhere to meet and drink.



Bant's Pub (formerly The Coventry Arms)

Architechural Characteristics

The first cottages are a terrace of three individual black and white style dwellings which include two with a thatched roof. The road has low density strip development on either side. Further along on the left side there is a short development of two storey semi detached houses, built in 1928, known as Windy Ridge. Opposite is the site of the former garage, which is presently the subject of a planning application for development into housing and other accommodation. The Stratford end of the road has farmland on the left and two storey houses and bungalows on the right. On the corner of Pershore Road there is a Designated Open Space which marks the separation between Upton and Snodsbury. They became one village combining both names in 1326. Beyond the Pershore Road there are two dwellings on the right and then open farm land on both sides.



Windy Ridge

3.3 PERSHORE ROAD, CROFT ROAD, HILLSIDE CLOSE, FLAX PIECE, COLLEGE ROAD

At the Worcester Road end of the Pershore Road there are dwellings on both sides and the area has the heaviest concentration of housing but it is still very low density. These dwellings continue down the road to Cowsden Lane and the Community Recreation Area. Beyond the curtilage of the village there is farmland and buildings with a few scattered dwellings.

Architectural Characteristics

The Village Post Office and Stores is on the left as you enter the road and opposite is the Old Vicarage. Both buildings are Victorian and are two storey red brick with slate roofs. On the right there are two timber framed dwellings – Tumbledown Cottage and the larger Upton House. Next to them stands St. Kenelm’s Church. On the left side of the Pershore Road there are detached houses, bungalows and cottages of individual style, they are mainly red brick and tile but include two black and white cottages.

Croft Road, on the left is a small development mainly of bungalows, was built in the mid 1960’s. They are all red brick with tiled roofs as are the two storied houses at the end of the close.

Hillside Close is also on the left of the Pershore Road and consists of five bungalows. They were built in the late 1990’s and provide housing for older residents, the bungalow’s are managed by a Housing Association. Next is Flax Piece also on the left of the Pershore road. This development is low density and has five two storied houses and five bungalows. Like the majority of dwellings in the village they are built of red brick and tile. They were constructed in the late 1970’s. After these are a mixture of old cottages and three blocks of modern semi-detached houses.



On the right College Road runs parallel to Pershore Road. It is a small ribbon development built in the mid 1950’s. The first three dwellings are bungalows and the other seventeen are two storied red brick and tile semi detached or short terraced houses. Many of these have been considerably extended and improved over the years and the majority are owner occupied.

At the end of the built up area on the right is Cutts Pool, which consists of five red brick and tile houses built in 1998. These are also managed by a Housing Association. Opposite them are six semi detached two storey houses which are owner occupied.

3.4 THE FURLONG, CHURCH ROAD, SCHOOL, CHAPEL & OWLS END LANES

This part of the village is in the heart of the conservation area. None of the roads are through roads and all end in footpaths which give access to the farmland beyond. The Village Hall, built in 1997 stands at the corner of Church Road and provides a vital meeting place for people of all ages. The Village School, which was built in 1865 and has since been considerable extended, is at the corner of Church Road and School Lane.

Architectural Characteristics

Church Road, School Lane, Chapel Lane and Owls End Lane consist mainly of detached owner occupied dwellings. On Church Road there are three black and white cottages one of which is thatched. There is one terrace of three black and white thatched cottages in School Lane. Opposite these stands a black and white cottage which was the village post office and the original post box remains on the gate post. In School Lane and Chapel Lane there are nine detached bungalows built between 1930 and the mid 1980's. They are all red brick and tile. The other properties in Chapel Lane and Owls end Lane are all of low density individual architectural style and amongst them are a further six black and white cottages. With one exception, none of the cottages or houses are more than two storeys high. The exception is a Georgian style dwelling of three storeys which stands at the corner of Chapel Lane and Owls End Lane. It is constructed of red brick and has a slate roof. Many dwellings have views over rolling farm land and the Malvern Hills or Bredon Hill. These lanes are very narrow making it difficult, and in some places impossible, for two vehicles to pass.

The Furlong is a small development just outside the conservation area, it consists of six semi detached red brick bungalows most of which are managed by a Housing Association.



Disused Victorian letter box



Bungalow in School Lane

3.5 COWSDEN AND LOWER COWSDEN

Cowsden and Lower Cowsden form a separate hamlet which is covered by the civil and ecclesiastical parishes of Upton Snodsbury. It consists of a great variety of houses and cottages which are well spread out and overlook the surrounding farm land and, from many, Bredon Hill or the Malvern Hills can be seen in the distance.



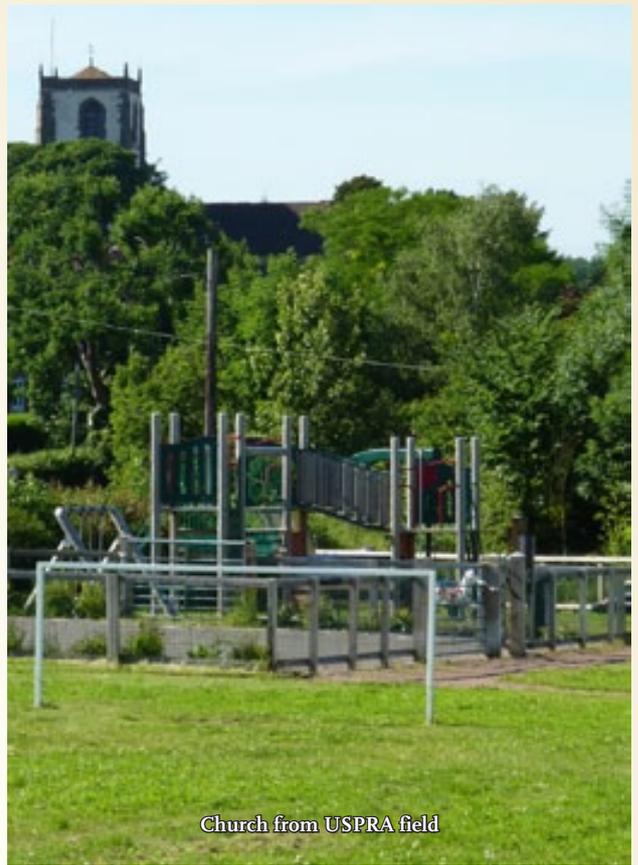
Cowsden Hall

Architectural Characteristics

There is a wide mixture of dwellings in this ancient settlement, some of them have been part rendered or painted white or cream others are traditional red brick or black and white cottages. As you enter Cowsden from Upton Snodsbury, Cowsden Hall Farm stands on the right. This is the largest dwelling in the hamlet, the others are spread out on both sides of the lane. Many of them have very large gardens and together they make a very attractive place in which to reside.



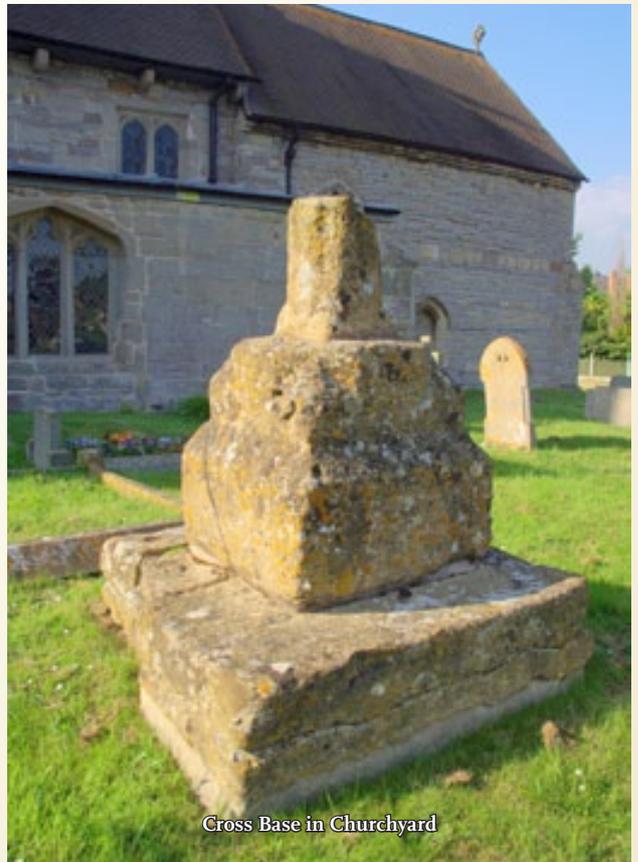
Modern Bungalow



Church from USPRA field



Less Modern House



Cross Base in Churchyard



An Old Cottage





Recycling Bins in Oak Car Park



Were swords sharpened here?



Old Cottages in School Lane



Looking south to Brendon Hill



Curious Horses!



4 UPTON SNODSBURY - BUILDINGS

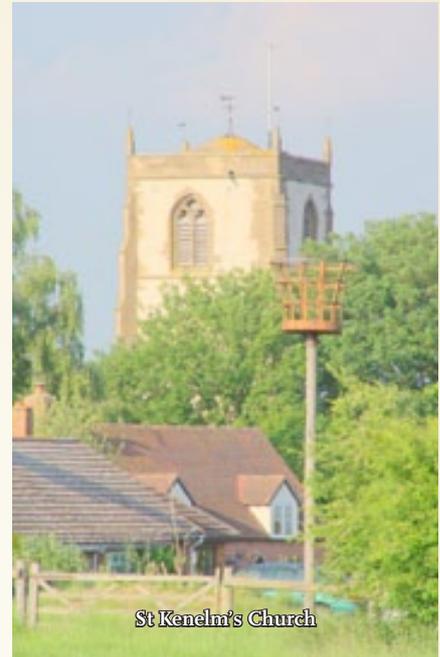
4.1

Upton Snodsbury can trace its origins back some two thousand years when the land now occupied by the village lay in the shadow of an Iron Age fort known as Castle Hill. Romans are known to have visited the area and around 500 AD an Anglo Saxon settlement was formed beside Bow Brook.

The Village is mentioned in the Domesday book in 1086 and its name is a combination of the settlement named after Snode, the Anglo Saxon Chief and Upton, meaning a hill settlement and these two were joined together in 1326 to form Upton Snodsbury.

The Villagers are quite rightly proud of their heritage and the diversity of the buildings that have evolved over the centuries.

Although there is some evidence of an ancient moated homestead just off the A422 road, the history of the buildings in Upton Snodsbury can be best measured on a time line starting with the oldest surviving building, St Kenelm's Church dating from the thirteenth century, through to the present modern day houses.

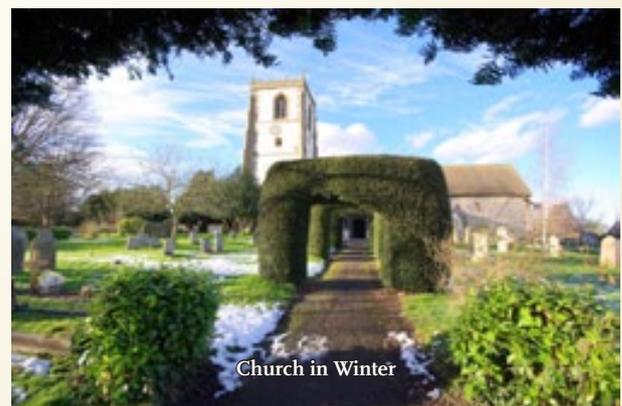


4.2 LISTED BUILDINGS

The Church and churchyard occupy a site in the centre of Upton Snodsbury within the conservation area. The East end of the chancel towers over the B4082 and the whole site is surrounded on the East and South sides by a listed retaining wall approaching two metres in height. The nave and chancel date from the 13th/14th century; the approx 21 metre high tower, and the south aisle, dating from the 15th century. The bulk of this Grade II* listed church, much restored in 1873, is built from blue lias, a clayey limestone which cannot be cut into large blocks.

Erosion to the tower, especially to the West and South faces, was arrested in 2000 by the application of a lime render which makes the tower visible from all directions – especially as Upton Snodsbury itself is on a raised hillock and most of the surrounding countryside is fairly flat.

The Church porch door is approached via an avenue of yew arches from a road on the south side. Near the pathway, close to the porch, is the lower part of an ancient preaching cross. Only a small portion of the shaft of this scheduled monument still exists as the remainder was destroyed at the time of the Reformation.



There are 26 listed buildings in the Parish representing just over 17 per cent of the total number of dwellings. In the main these consist of the “traditional” black and white cottages which are typical of the older buildings found in Worcestershire. Nearly 60 per cent of these lie within a designated conservation area and they are all are subject to strict planning controls before any building work is allowed to take place.

St Kenhelm's church is the only building in the village to pre-date the Civil War and Parish records show one cottage near to the church dating back to the time of Charles 2nd and it is likely that a number of the other cottages can also be dated from this period, the latter part of the seventeenth century onwards.

Originally, these cottages would have been constructed from a timber frame with the walls made from wattle and daub and a thatched roof. Thatched roofs, however, are becoming increasingly expensive and have to be replaced every thirty years or so.

The windows would have been made in timber and single glazed glass with metal opening casements. Many different types of windows can be seen in the Village, but listed building regulations now stipulate that they must be made of wood and single glazed and PVCu double glazed windows are no longer permitted in these buildings.

A number of them are likely to have been single storey buildings which have been added to or extended. Over a period of time, some of these cottages have been converted and now have brick walls and tiled roofs, although a number of them still retain their original characteristics.

There were known to be many more of this type of buildings in the Village but regrettably a large number of them were demolished during the latter part of the twentieth century to make way for more modern buildings.



4.3 VICTORIAN ERA

One example of Victorian architecture is the local Village School which was founded in 1865 and still remains popular to this day, with some 55 pupils attending from other local villages, as well as Upton Snodsbury itself.

The original School building is built from red brick with a steep tiled roof. Several extensions have been added in recent years. Other examples of this era are the Village Post Office and the Old Vicarage both of which are built from red brick under a slate roof, two of the few buildings in the village to have this type of roof.



There are two pubs in Upton Snodsbury, the Oak and Bant's. Both places can trace their origins back to the 19th century and over the years have been modernised and substantially refurbished to provide high quality restaurant facilities and accommodation.

4.4 TWENTIETH CENTURY

The next major development in the Village was in 1928 when semi-detached houses were built on the A422 road and known as Windy Ridge. These houses are constructed from red brick and tile? White upper facing made from stucco. During the 1950s a small development known as College Road was built consisting of bungalows and two story red brick and tile houses. Over the years many of these have been extended and improved.

Croft Road was built in the mid 1960s and consists mainly of bungalows with red brick walls and tiled roofs. During the 1980s Flax Piece was built and the with low density two storey houses and in keeping with the majority of dwellings are constructed in red brick and tile.

Cutts Pool on the B4082 Pershore road was filled in in the 1950's and five new two storey houses were constructed on the site in 1998. These are built of red brick with tiled roofs and are managed by a Housing Association.

The Village Hall, which is the focal point of the community, was built in 1997 and in keeping with the surrounding dwellings is constructed from red brick with a tiled roof.

4.5 COWSDEN

Cowsden is a hamlet situated within the Parish of Upton Snodsbury and consists of a variety of houses and cottages which are either red brick and tile built or the more traditional black and white cottage. The largest dwelling there is Cowsden Hall which was once the vicarage and is constructed using stone and brick under a slate roof.



5 THE WIDER ENVIRONMENT

5.1 OPEN SPACES

Upton Snodsbury has a picturesque setting, the Village being centred around the church on the top of a hill. The majority of the housing is concentrated along and adjacent to the B4082 Pershore Road with some housing along the A422 on the northern edge of the Village. The Village is surrounded by a rural landscape of grazing and farmland with abundant hedging, wooded areas and the remains of orchards. The Village itself has some open spaces set aside for recreation and leisure activities. These spaces, with public access, are a valuable part of Village life and must be preserved. Green spaces within the Village can be categorised as either formal or informal.

Formal Space:

The Furlong (which also serves as a Village car parking area).
Upton Snodsbury First School playground and playing field.
Upton Snodsbury Parish Recreational Area (containing mini football pitch, petanque court, playground and cycle bumps).
Queen's Coppice.
BC 7 Designated open space and strategic gap with memorial trees.

Informal Space:

Upton Snodsbury Football Club football ground.



The green spaces around the Village are actively used by 82 per cent of the Village population using the footpaths, pathways and bridleways which go through much of the land around the village. In general, these are well-maintained and signed. Maintaining the current Village boundaries are felt to be important by the villagers, 67 per cent of respondents to the Parish Plan wished to keep the current village boundaries with no further encroachment into the surrounding Green Belt land.

5.2 AMENITIES

The Village contains one village post office and stores. Sixty nine per cent of the villagers use the village shop regularly and the shop maintains a good service from a limited stock. The Post Office is very well used, particularly since the closure of neighbouring post offices, such as that in Pinvin. The importance of the Village Post Office and Stores is such that the Parish Council contributes to reduce the Business Rate on those premises.



Upton Snodsbury Church of England First School has a capacity of 74 pupils, of which in 2010 55 places are taken up. The Village School has no PE facilities and has to make use of the Village Hall. The catchment area for the Village school extends outside the Village boundaries including Broughton Hackett, White Ladies Aston, Churchill, Bredicot, Sneachill and Warndon. Owing to this wide catchment area flood risk to the A422 and B4082 raises the spectre of the children being marooned at the school. Such an event is part of the Parish Emergency Plan.

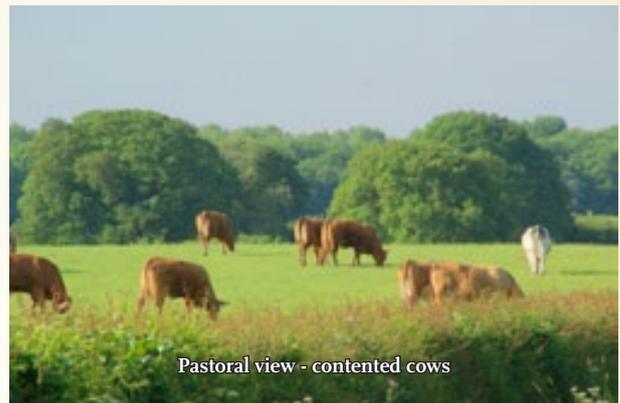
The County Council Mobile Library visits both Upton Snodsbury and Cowsden once every three weeks.

The Village Hall is used by 77 per cent of respondents to the Parish Plan Survey and is attractively positioned in the very centre of the Village, opposite the Church and very near to the village school. It has limited parking facilities for five vehicles.

St Kenelm's church is the oldest building in the village and 68 per cent of the respondents have attended the church on various occasions, although the usual congregation is a much smaller percentage. The churchyard has almost reached capacity and there are very few burial plots now available. The Oak public house contains the Village recycling facility in its car park, which is open for use to all residents.

5.3 LANDSCAPE AND ACCESS

Upton Snodsbury is fortunate in its attractive surrounding landscape. There are currently six active farms which between them contain much of the land outside the Village boundaries. These working farms make an important contribution to maintaining the use and appearance of the landscape. Many of the footpaths within the Village traverse this land providing important recreational facilities for walkers of all ages, as well as maintaining good management of equine usage to minimise its impact on the landscape. There are some 64Km of footpaths. The footpaths are well-maintained and the Parish Council has a designated Footpaths Officer.



Although there are no official Parish Council allotments one of the local farmers sub-lets land to provide a limited number of allotments for villagers. This facility is well-used.

5.3.1 Flood Risk

Since Upton Snodsbury is situated on a hill with relatively few low-lying buildings there are limited flood risks within the village. Vulnerable areas have been identified as Cutts Pool houses, and also Bull Cottages. There has been some problems with flooding of Upton Snodsbury First School due to run-off from higher land around The Furlong; it is hoped that recent remedial action has solved this problem. Properties at the extreme southerly edge of Cowsden are also sometimes affected by flooding from water running off the higher land at that area.

It should be realised that serious flooding within the surrounding area can rapidly cut off the Village since the A422 becomes flooded at Bow Brook (the Westerly limit of the Village) and also at Grafton Flyford. Similar flooding takes place along the B4082 Pershore Road beyond the limits of the Village boundary. The Village was in fact cut off in July 2007. The Parish Council has a Flood Officer and an Emergency Plan for such eventualities. In addition, the Parish Lengthsman maintains roadside grips and ditches.

5.4 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

The Highways which proceed through Upton Snodsbury are all 30 mph limit. One of the main concerns of parishioners during the survey for the Parish Plan was excessive road speed and road safety. Sixty five per cent of the respondents were concerned over this issue and a mobile active 30 mph warning sign is likely to be used in the Village on a half-time basis. Villagers were also concerned about the pavements and often lack of footways within the Village. Within the Village boundaries pavements are provided along the entire length of the A422, as well as the upper part of the B4082, by the shop and the church and Village Hall, as well as at the extreme southerly end along the new houses at Cutts



Pool. In spite of the B4082 being the main road through the village, there are no pavements on either side over part of this distance. There are also pavements for Croft Road, Flax Piece and Church Road.. Beyond the school there are no pavements, nor are there any pavements through the entire hamlet of Cowsden. However, 40 per cent of villagers found the existing pavements difficult to use, citing the fact that they were too narrow or had broken surfaces.

5.4.1 Highway Maintenance

In general the road surfaces throughout the Village are poorly maintained, as are the pavements. This is frequently a problem where there is no pavement and the edge of the road surface breaks up causing pedestrians to walk more towards the centre of the road. This also causes problems for both cyclists and motorcyclists.

5.4.2 Transport

The Village has no rail links and limited bus services. The scheduled bus service is Route 350 from Upton Snodsbury to Worcester or Redditch. There are five services a day to Worcester, plus one school bus, and in addition there are four services from Worcester, plus three school buses. School buses are also provided from Upton Snodsbury to Pinvin and Pershore. In addition there is a Community Service bus which goes from Upton Snodsbury to Pershore, but with no public published timetable. This Community Bus Service runs once a week on a Friday, which has to be booked on the preceding day and leaves Upton Snodsbury at 9am returning by leaving Pershore at 12 noon, taking one hour in each direction as it calls at a variety of villages before arriving in Upton Snodsbury at 1pm.

5.5 Services

Utility poles are prominent throughout the Village, as all the electricity, as well as the telephone services, are provided overhead. Although there has been a past history of very poor electrical services this has improved over recent years. There is no mains gas supply within the Village and British Gas has advised that it has no plans install this amenity.

Over 50 per cent of the Village has problems with water supply, and part of the problem of the roads is exacerbated by poor land drainage, which the system beneath the roads seems unable to cope with. It is also true that part of Upton Snodsbury and all of Cowsden is not on the main sewage system.

There is no street lighting within the Village and whereas this increases the rural nature of the Village, because of poor or absent footpaths this creates risk for pedestrians.

Mobile phone reception is poor over much of the village and landline phone and internet services are very restricted.





6. DESIGNING FOR THE FUTURE

Whilst accepting that Upton Snodsbury will continue to see new developments in the future, the village is concerned that their design and location should be appropriate and sympathetic to the village's appearance.

The attached map should be referred to when any development is considered.

The following guidelines are based upon the community's views (including the 2008 Parish Plan) about the villages built and landscape environment. These guidelines are intended to assist developers, builders, architects and householders in design considerations and when applying for planning permission. In addition they will help Wychavon Planning Department in their response to applications.

6.1 GUIDELINE OVERVIEW

Any development in the village should carefully consider the village as a whole. This would help to prevent further ribbon development and promote social integration and sense of belonging in the community.

It is important that there are a variety of buildings to support the sustainability of the village and meet the needs of the different people within the community. This should include family housing, single person dwellings, single storey buildings. New housing should be interesting without being obtrusive, and in keeping with the existing village.

6.2 GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL DEVELOPMENTS

These guidelines are designed to:-

Ensure that all new development is eco friendly by,

- Complying with environmental building and planning regulations as a minimum.
- Designing-in the use of solar panels and other renewable energy facilities to reduce the overall impact on our currently inadequate facilities.
- Understanding and supporting the currently inadequate utility infrastructure
- Including adequate sized gardens for vegetable growing and/or access to allotments

Protect the character of the village by

- Retaining open spaces and recreational land.
- Preserving key views across the village.
- Conserving valued buildings, their features and architectural details preserving the Strategic Gap which divides the ancient communities of Upton and Snodsbury
- Maintaining hedges, trees and verges

Ensure development is in keeping with the village by

- Use of materials appropriate to the location
- Avoiding obtrusive lighting, minimising light pollution and nuisance thorough site appraisal so that design is appropriate in size sensitive to location and respects the context of adjacent buildings.
- Demanding high standards of design and workmanship.



Making development sensitive within its environment by ensuring

- Using architects with good understanding of local tradition and design so that new buildings make a positive contribution to the area.
- That design is interesting and/or original without being intrusive development/alterations and sympathetic to surrounding buildings and the environment.

Minimise potential flood risk by ensuring

- All new development must, where appropriate protect against flooding as a priority.
- Hard, impermeable surfacing is discouraged especially in areas with a history of flooding
- Watercourses, drainage ditches and gullies are well maintained
- Roof water should not be allowed to drain into the sewage system
- The design of new buildings should allow for conservation of water, eg rainwater collection and re-use systems etc.

6.3 GUIDELINES FOR THE CONSERVATION AREA

Specific regulations laid down by planning authorities protect our conservation area. Development proposals within this area must both conform to regulations and be sympathetic to the heritage of Upton Snodsbury. Conservation has special characteristics, which are sensitive and easily eroded by inappropriate development and alterations.

Advice for householders, architects, developers and builders is readily available from Wychavon District Council's Planning Department. (See their Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document) Informal advice can also be obtained from Upton Snodsbury Parish Council.

6.4 GUIDELINES FOR NEW BUILDING

These guidelines should be read in the context of the Wychavon Local Plan.

New buildings must be harmonious with, and appropriate to, their location in scale and design. This means:

- any new development comprising several houses should ensure that it is ecofriendly and has the minimal possible impact on existing utilities
- all development should use green building materials wherever possible
- infilling should not obscure key views of the surrounding landscape
- standardised house design should be avoided
- gardens essential to the settings of houses and cottages should not be used for buildings
- materials should be sympathetic with surrounding buildings
- new buildings should respect neighbouring roof profiles and pitches
- new properties should be spaced reasonably (both to the side and to the front)
- any new development comprising several houses should be of moderate density



6.5 GUIDELINES FOR ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS

These must follow all Wychavon local planning regulations.

Alterations should retain and enhance the condition and character of existing valued buildings. They should

- use materials and techniques appropriate to the age of the building
- compliment the building and its surroundings, respecting form, style, materials and detail
- not detract from the scale and proportion of the original building

6.6 GUIDELINES FOR OPEN SPACES AND RECREATIONAL LAND

These make an important contribution to Upton Snodsbury and therefore it is important to safeguard existing trees, recreational areas, grass verges.

It is important that

- the development of the overall village plan ensures open spaces within the village boundary are maintained and enhanced, including the Strategic Gap
- some open space is accessible to the less able
- village recreational areas are preserved, for the use of the whole community
- private gardens are preserved, hedges well kept and correctly maintained
- replanting is encouraged with native trees, shrubs and flowers
- steps to eradicate dog litter contamination are properly enforced

6.7 GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CURRENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Improvements are needed to the current infrastructure, especially in the following areas:

Roads and footways: it is important that:

- speeding restrictions are clear and enforced on all village roads
- there is adequate parking provision in all new development
- pavements are supplied on all new roads and existing pavements are well maintained. Aim to provide pavements along all main roads in the village.

Transport:

- Improvements to the bus service are much needed to give access to employment opportunities nearby.
- Public transport should be integrated i.e. buses should be available to the railway stations. Buses running to Pershore and Shrub Hill stations should tie in with the times of trains to London and Birmingham, especially at peak commuting times
- Improved public transport provision will help to decrease car usage in a significant way
- We would like to have greater provision for cyclists and to see the development of a county wide integrated network of cycle paths.



6.8 GUIDELINES FOR MAJOR DEVELOPMENT

If there were to be significant development in the village (i.e. a total of over 10 new houses) then this must be carefully considered in its entirety to ensure it enhances the village as a whole.





7. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The community of Upton Snodsbury accepts continued and small scale sympathetic development is necessary to ensure a thriving and sustainable village and the benefits this will bring. Any development will necessitate significant investment to improve the very poor current utilities (i.e. roads, internet, water, sewerage, electricity and mobile communications) These improvements should be completed prior to and development.

In our drive to become carbon neutral we want to continue to encourage the whole community to get behind environmental initiatives. All new developments within our parish no matter how small must ensure that they support this vision.

7.1 IMPROVING VILLAGE LIFE

Affordable Housing

The village recognises there may be a limited requirement for some affordable housing for local people whilst noting that there is already a significant provision. Schemes need to be carefully integrated into the community, and be linked to employment opportunities and greatly improved public transport. Mixed affordable and private housing is the most desirable way forward. Section 106 monies arising from developments should be maximized and used for community-wide improvements within the parish.

Crime and Vandalism

Upton Snodsbury is fortunate in not suffering unduly from neither serious nor petty crime. The village has an active Neighbourhood Watch/Farm Watch network and residents have the opportunity to contact the local police who have always been very approachable or to ask the parish council to contact them on their behalf.

Employment and Business

There are no big employers in the parish but there are a number of small businesses: ie the Post Office & Stores; 2 public houses; Farms; Agriservices; Holy Oak Farm offices; Holy Oak Farm holiday lets; Court Farm (storage, equestrian facilities, farm); Homeworking (NB internet facilities need improving); Short term lets. Upton Snodsbury could provide an opportunity for more small businesses if the infrastructure were improved (see point 6.7). This could bring more employment to the parish, as well as encouraging home workers.

Tourism and Visitors

Upton Snodsbury in on the edge of the Vale of Evesham and as such benefits from a small but steady number of visitors, including ramblers and cyclists. Of particular interest is St Kenelms Church and the black and white cottages in the village.

7.2 THE ENVIRONMENT

Concern for the environment is fundamental to our village. We wish to be creative and responsible in our approach to green challenges.

Existing attempts in Upton Snodsbury have included sun pipes, solar panels, recycling rainwater, composting, allotments, growing vegetables, reuse of carrier bags, etc. We would be able to decrease car use with improvements in public transport. The village school is working towards Green Flag Status, and their eco-council has already introduced a scheme whereby pupils walk part way to school after leaving their bus, food composting, no throwaway plastic containers, etc.



There are recycling facilities both at District and village level (e.g. in The Oak car park and the Throckmorton tip). Further improvements are necessary.

The future design of buildings in Upton Snodsbury should be environmentally friendly and the use of sustainable building materials should be encouraged. Designs should strive to consciously exceed Wychavon building regulations.

Size of gardens should be considered and if the design does not allow gardens of a sufficient size for growing vegetables. Provision for allotments should also be considered.

7.3 ENERGY

Upton Snodsbury recognises the need to reduce energy use and carbon emissions, and we especially encourage the use of renewable forms of energy. When applications are made for new buildings or conversion of existing buildings reduced energy use must be of prime consideration, in line with local planning controls (see 6.4).

In communities such as Upton Snodsbury renewable energy could be generated in a variety of ways without damaging the appearance of traditional buildings and the tranquility of the landscape

In any significant future development we would encourage proposals to reduce the impact on our current inadequate utilities and facilities, and reduce waste and energy consumption, for example:

- sewerage system: reed beds, improved sewerage pipes, compostable toilets, ecological treatment plants, etc.
- water conservation: water butts and reuse of grey water.
- electricity supply.

Upton Snodsbury welcomes the use of solar panels (both voltaic and water heating), etc as long as strict guidelines are observed, particularly where listed buildings are concerned.

7.4 MAJOR DEVELOPMENT

As of mid 2010 there are no single large scale developments planned in Upton Snodsbury other than the Woodview Garage site.

To ensure that all development is harmonious and to the benefit of the community, any significant housing increase should be looked at within the whole village picture and not just considered individually. Upton Snodsbury should not increase its ribbon development but strive to improve the overall layout of its community. In order to ensure a sustainable community family housing is needed, which will in turn ensure future viability of our village school. New housing should reflect an informed and balanced design based on the information contained in this document.

7.5 INSPIRATION FOR THE FUTURE

The challenge we face is to retain the essence of the character of Upton Snodsbury whilst ensuring that any development improves community life. We are working to become a more eco-conscious community by encouraging better waste and energy management both now and in the future.

Changes will always occur and the residents of Upton Snodsbury need to ensure that such changes are well managed and seen to be in the best interests of the community – not only in the short term but for future generations who will be fortunate to live in this ‘Jewel in Worcestershire’.



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Professor Graham Harding(PC)

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Upton Snodsbury
Village Design Statement
August 2010

Terry Eagle, Chairman